



Outside the comfort zone

The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey
Peter Jackson (Director)

Much of the early discussion of Peter Jackson's new film, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, has focused on Jackson's use of the latest 3D technology by shooting at 48 frames-per-second. Some viewers complain that the picture quality is so eye-poppingly clear that it becomes distracting and even disquieting. Jackson himself has remarked that it may take the average filmgoer half the movie before he or she feels truly comfortable.

Comfort, in fact, is a major theme in the film, as it is in the classic children's book on which it is based. Bilbo, 'a Baggins of Bag End', spends a good portion of the film praising, then longing for, the comforts of home. On the first page, author J.R.R. Tolkien wrote that Bilbo's home meant 'comfort'. For French philosopher Gaston Bachelard, the 'house allows one to dream in peace'. Without a house, 'man is a dispersed being'. In the climactic scene of the film outside Gollum's cave, Bilbo finally commits himself wholeheartedly to the quest, telling Thorin that because he likes his home so much he wants to help the Company take back their own home from the dragon who made them refugees.

Having already survived a difficult childhood, Tolkien lost several of his closest friends in the trenches of World War I. Tolkien, like Bachelard, understood that 'home' can have conflicting psychological resonances. Home can connote warmth, comfort, security, but also stagnation, risk-aversion and constraint. In the film Gandalf warns Bilbo that when he returns from his journey he will be changed and may not be so comfortable at home as he has been.

The Hobbit has long appealed to psychologists for its obvious correspondences to the process of maturation. As the book opens, Bilbo is effectively a 50-year-old child nestled in his comfy hobbit hole. By the end of the tale Bilbo has achieved Jungian individuation or Maslowian self-actualisation by stepping out of his comfort zone, resolving his inner conflicts, and growing in courage, self-confidence, and self-understanding by confronting challenges and dangers.

The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey is a flawed but very good film. It is over-long, the dialogue occasionally limps, and there is too much dwarfish and trollish clownishness. Otherwise, the film triumphantly succeeds. It is visually and technologically stunning, the action scenes are terrific, Andy Serkis' Gollum is brilliant beyond words, and (unlike the *Lord of the Rings* films) the many changes Jackson makes to Tolkien's original storyline are nearly always effective.

Our advice, then, is to step outside your own comfy hobbit hole and see Jackson's *Hobbit* film the way it was meant to be seen: as a cutting-edge work of art in 3D format. It will be an adventure.

Reviewed by Gregory Bassham who is a Professor of Philosophy at King's College Pennsylvania, and **Eric Bronson** who is a visiting Professor in the Humanities Department at York University Toronto. The pair are editors, with William Irwin, of *The Hobbit and Philosophy* (Wiley, 2012).



An indispensable guide



The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Schema Therapy: Theory, Research and Practice
Michiel van Vreeswijk, Jenny Broersen, & Marjon Nadort (Eds.)

With a foreword by Jeff Young, the founder of schema therapy, this handbook is truly indispensable for any clinician with an interest in schema therapy, from the novice to the experienced schema therapist.

Written by international experts in schema therapy, this book covers a wealth of information relating to schema therapy, including theory, diagnostic considerations, therapy techniques (integrating mindfulness and ACT), new settings and populations (including adolescents, groups and forensic settings), training issues, research developments and issues relating to public policy and cost-effectiveness.

It is easy to read and structured in a way that allows the reader to 'dip' into areas of specialist interest. Many chapters include case studies and therapy transcripts, allowing the clinician to readily access the information and relate it to their own clinical practice.

At the end of his foreword, Jeff Young states that he believes 'that this handbook should be required reading for anyone interested in the field'; and I couldn't agree more. Overall, an exciting, informative and interesting book, which renewed my passion for schema therapy.

Wiley-Blackwell, 2012; Hb £110.00

Reviewed by Dr Tina Perry-Moore who is a clinical psychologist with Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust

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A psychological treat



Book of the Week.
The Examined Life
by Stephan Grosz,
read by Peter
Marinker
BBC Radio 4

I love Radio Four. There is something I find calming and reassuring about the structure of the scheduling and the approach of the programmes. Radio Four has been there for me in times of stress: finals revision, romantic break-ups, thesis writing...

There are also some real programming gems, such as *The Life Scientific* and *All in the Mind*. Book of the Week I think is a great idea, but I sometimes dislike the choices of books, partly because I seem to have

an unerring tendency to switch on the radio in the middle of the night only if there is a frightening murder mystery being read out, complete with screams. Book of the week in early January was a psychological treat though. Extracts from *The Examined Life* by Stephan Grosz were read by Peter Marinker. Marinker read in a soothing voice which suited both the material and my idealised idea of Radio Four.

I listened to two of the five extracts, episode two and episode five. I had already come



across the book on my mother's bookshelves at Christmas (mother has also retrained as a psychotherapist – read into that what you will), and found it easy

to pick up and dip into. The book uses short vignettes of patients to tell a story, to involve the reader or listener, and to bring to life psychoanalytic concepts. The

radio programmes were similar, easy to listen to for anyone, no matter how much background knowledge of psychoanalysis they had. In fact I wondered if the book and radio reading might even be more suited to

people with less knowledge of psychoanalysis. Ideas such as splitting were explained beautifully clearly, and the extracts chosen did well to incorporate some of these explanations. It reminded me of Yalom's *Love's Executioner* in its fundamental idea, although I am afraid to say I thought Yalom handled the idea in a more sophisticated and subtle way. The extracts I heard from *The Examined Life* felt a little too neat and some of the conclusions drawn felt a little too glib.

Nonetheless, a nice choice for Book of the Week and worth having a look at the book or a listen to on iPlayer.

I Reviewed by Lucy Maddox, a Clinical Psychologist in the NHS and Associate Editor for 'Reviews'

Challenging public prejudices



Dr Howard Fine is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist, co-founder of Recolo UK Ltd, and a regular consulting psychologist for media productions on child development and education (with recent contributions to Educating Essex, Jamie Oliver's Dream School, Cutting Edge and Panorama). Here he reviews his own involvement in the Channel 4 series *The Undateables*.

The Undateables highlights the challenges that a disability may offer to someone looking for a relationship. The series followed individuals with a broad range of presentations, including physical disability, learning disability, acquired brain injury, mental health disorders and congenital disorders associated with facial disfigurement, as they enter the dating circuit in pursuit of a relationship.

My role as a consulting psychologist was to advocate for and support the contributors, as well as offering consultation to the production team. Due to the potential social, emotional and cognitive vulnerabilities, consideration was given to capacity, stability, ability to cope with pressures of the production process (unpredictability, performance anxiety, setting boundaries), to ensure that any vulnerability would not be exacerbated by their involvement in the programme. I further needed to ensure that the contributors were resilient enough and had resources around them to support the pressures from public feedback in respect of their public exposure.

During the production and post-production, containment and support was offered to the families and contributors as appropriate, ranging from personal insecurities about their abilities and appearance, to the perceived expectations of how they would be received by their potential dates and assumptions based on first impressions. There were also quite normal anxieties raised regarding the public's response to the programme.

Independent consultation to the production company helped



'It was very fulfilling to have a media company, which are in some way responsible for public perception, to be so receptive and able to take on an educative role'

them better understand the individual needs of the contributors, including issues around capacity, informed consent, and minimising stress and change. The welfare of the individuals took precedent over the production needs, with the production company adhering to the recommendations made and were respectful of the dignity of the contributors. This was well received by the families involved as well as the external advocating agencies. It was very fulfilling to have a media company, which are in some way responsible for public perception, to be so receptive and able to take on an educative role.

This programme was of particular interest due to relevance to the client groups we work with, faced with the dual obstacles of aspiring to lead a normal life and enjoy the same human rights and freedoms as everyone else, as well as challenging public prejudices. I felt this was sensitively produced with great efforts to support the individuals and their families. I hope this series is recognised for bringing these issues to the fore, rather than dismissed as uncomfortable exploitation.

Sampling the candy



Graham Davey's Blog
<http://grahamdavey.blogspot.co.uk>

A growing number of psychologists – in training, in research, in practice – are entering the blogosphere. In the last issue we heard about Professor Dorothy Bishop's prize-winning efforts; this month I would like to highlight Professor Graham Davey's blog.

Davey is Professor of Psychology at the University of Sussex, and he began blogging last January (as well as tweeting as @GrahamCLDavey). During 2012 he racked up 21 honest and thought-provoking entries on a range of topics the discipline cannot afford to shrink from, such as mental health interventions, psychology as a science, meeting Skinner, experimenter effects, textbooks, and more.

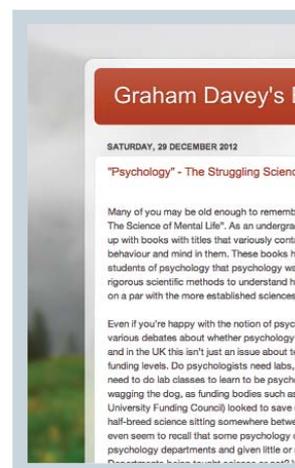
His post of 4 December was a fine example of how to blog. Under the heading 'Stickers', 'Jugglers' and 'Switchers and dumpers', Davey posed the question 'Which

kind of researcher should you be?' Recalling his postgraduate time as 'a dyed-in-the-wool behaviourist loading rats into Skinner boxes and clichés into arguments,' Davey mused how 'relatively narrow interests (and views and approaches) can seem like they are the universe... But what happens later on in our academic lives? Should we stay focused and hone our skills in a focused research niche, or should we nervously wander out of that niche into new areas with new challenges requiring new skills?'

As with a lot of good blogging, this really struck a chord with me – in fact, partly due to a failed job interview many moons ago at Davey's own university! 'If you are a newly graduated PhD,' Davey wrote, 'most recruiting Departments will want to know that you are – as they put it – "capable of independent research" before appointing you. Do you go scrabbling for that last section in your thesis entitled "Future Directions" and try to stretch out your PhD research (often in a painfully synthetic way, like seeing how far some bubble-gum will stretch – even though the "amount" there is still the same). Or do you bite the bullet and try your newly-learnt skills on some new and different problems?'

Davey goes on to set out the options. The 'stickers' often concentrate on a small, limited number of research problems but maybe have the benefit of developing more and more refined (and sometimes more complex) theoretical models. Take that path, Davey warns, and you risk becoming 'the person who sits near the front at international conferences and begins asking questions with the phrase "Thank you for your very interesting talk, but..."'

So what about becoming a 'juggler', with at least two relatively independent streams of research? This diversity has its advantages, and that man B.F. Skinner



A new approach

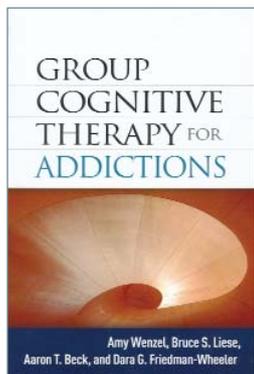


Group Cognitive Therapy for Addictions
 Amy Wenzel, Bruce S. Liese, Aaron T. Beck & Dara G. Friedman-Wheeler

This book is both timely and welcome. Timely in that it details an evidence-based, cost-effective method of group treatment for addictions; welcome in that it allows psychologists to reach out to treat effectively the ever-increasing numbers of clients presenting with addictive behaviours. Here addictions are not limited to substance misuse but extend to all forms of addictive behaviour, including sex and gambling. Issues relating to dual-diagnosis are also addressed.

The authors describe

the implementation of a specific form of treatment, the cognitive therapy addictions group, (CTAG), based upon a comprehensive cognitive model of addiction. This is an open-ended group so members can enter and leave at any time. The authors provide a persuasive rationale for the use of this model. The cognitive model overarches the approach, but the emphasis is also on group processes as an aid to



recovery. Clients are encouraged to support each other's efforts to meet achievable goals. The authors provide cognitive conceptualisations relevant both to individuals and to the group as a whole supported by clinical vignettes so the reader can gain a flavour of actual sessions. There are numerous clear and informative tables. Additionally they provide examples of forms used in the course of therapy, which readers can use in their own practice.

I was very impressed by the layout and readability of this book. The authors have avoided the manualised 'cook-book' approach and have achieved a balance between the discussion of theoretical principles and their application to practice.

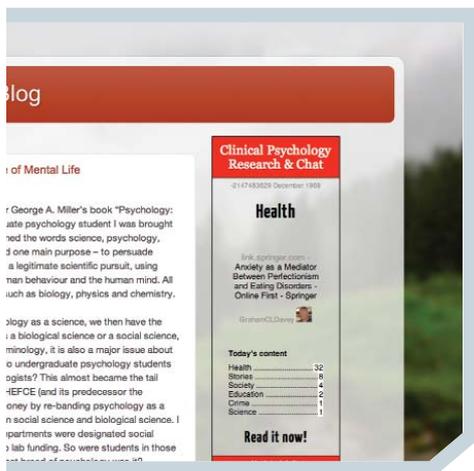
Guilford Press; 2012; Hb £26.99
 Reviewed by Clive Sims who is an independent psychologist and researcher



Second series welcome

Dara O Briain's Science Club
 BBC2

Dara O Briain's Science Club tackles the big questions in science, and the fifth episode, about the brain, broadcast on 7 December, was no different. The programme covered new developments along with old favourites, such as a demonstration of the rubber hand illusion. I was completely enthralled by a report from researchers at Brown University who trained a woman suffering from



promoted the scientific principle of serendipity – if something interesting crops up in your research, drop everything and study it! Davey says this approach spawns some entrepreneurial ‘switchers and dumpers’, ‘who post a new (and largely unsubstantiated) theory about something in the literature, and then move on to a completely new (and often more trending)

area of research, leaving researchers of the former topic to fight, bicker and prevaricate, often for years, about what eventually turns out to be a red herring, or a blind alley, or a complete flight of fancy designed to grab the headlines at the time.’

Unfortunately, but understandably, Davey stops short of naming names. But his own preference for serendipity is clear: ‘Research isn’t just about persevering at a problem until you’ve tackled it from every conceivable angle, it’s also an opportunity to try out as many candies in the shop as you can – as long as you sample responsibly!’

Professor Davey tells me it was his postgrad students who convinced him to start blogging. ‘I’d always had a tendency to diverge and “rant” on about pet issues in research meetings. So they suggested I should expose these flights of fancy to a wider audience, and – as they put it – “get down with the kids”! Having blogged for a year now, I’m happy to recommend it unreservedly. It’s a great way of honing your writing skills – especially the “being concise and engaging” bits. But more than anything else, if you have views and ideas about science or psychology, a blog is one of the greatest ways of getting feedback on those

thoughts as well as introducing people to new ideas and alerting them to new information. Science is not just about the pedantic journal publishing juggernaut, it’s also very much about the thought processes that precede formal publication, how science is conducted, and – perhaps most importantly – how enjoyable science is. All these are legitimate grist to the blogger’s mill.’

As with many bloggers, Professor Davey’s efforts are worthy of a wider and more interactive audience. I hope his example will encourage other psychologists to try their hand at this underrated form of dissemination and debate.

I Reviewed by Jon Sutton *Managing Editor of The Psychologist*

Intimacy vs. love



Intimacy
Ziyad Marar

Most of us spend our lives searching for love, for that one unique person with whom we can share our innermost thoughts and desires. In his third book, Marar describes intimacy as being a complex concept and outlines the parallels between intimacy and love, whilst identifying a key set of ingredients – reciprocity, conspiracy, emotion and kindness – that characterise the existence of intimacy, without which he says our life is unfulfilled.

Writing in dialogue form, Marar explores the intricacies of intimacy and examines the barriers to achieving it that many of us face in today’s world of consumerism and social media. He details the many obstacles that impede our search for intimacy as well as our own insecurities that keep intimacy at bay. Drawing on insights from philosophy, psychology, and popular literature and film, Marar shows how intimacy is central to a life well lived.

This is a bold and thought-provoking book with brilliant insight into human psychology and required reading for anyone brave enough to embrace this human experience that is as elusive as it is powerful.

I Acumen; 2012; Pb £14.99
Reviewed by Kirsten Nokling *who is a research assistant at the Spectrum Centre for Mental Health Research, Lancaster University*



paralysis from the neck downwards to control a robotic arm with her thoughts. Truly the stuff of science fiction, this kind of reporting shows how important psychology and neuroscience is, and what a difference these advances can make to people’s lives.

As has become customary in the show, a segment was given over to experimentation using super-strength Polish vodka.

As Professor Mark Miodownik put a brain in a blender, then added vodka and water to produce an emulsion of the fat, I wondered whether this experiment had been chosen for the addition it made to the programme, or simply for the sake of a running joke. I think this segment could have been better filled with one of the many psychological experiments people could have experienced for themselves – perhaps a demonstration of the Ames room or the inverted face illusion.

A lively discussion was raised around ‘smart drugs’ – cognitive enhancers that may improve focus and productivity. An audience poll produced an interesting outcome – those who would consider

taking the drugs were not always the same people who would be happy for others to do so. I am undecided – while I can see the benefits for those with demanding jobs, such as surgeons, I worry about the lack of longitudinal studies, and the possibility of developing tolerance or dependence – something not mentioned in the show.

Professor Uta Frith was on hand as the expert guest, and put in an admirable performance, managing to explain difficult concepts clearly and enthusiastically. Along with two female reporters, and a clip of Professor Barbara Sahakian talking about ‘smart drugs’, it was good to see some female scientific role models – something that is sadly lacking from the scientific ‘hall of fame’ the guests add to each week.

Science Club is a great attempt at bringing science to the mainstream in a way that is engaging and informative, but in places it can become a little formulaic. I think, in general, they handled the difficult topic of neuroscience well, and I very much hope a second series is commissioned.

I Reviewed by Ginny Smith ([@GinnyFBSmith](#)) *who is a psychology graduate now working as a freelance science communicator*

How are you feeling right now?



Mappiness
iPhone app

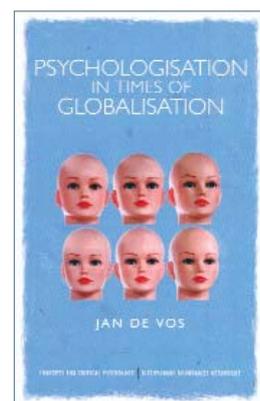
Mappiness was developed by George MacKerron, an environmental economist at the London School of Economics, to provide data on how people's well-being fluctuates in response to their environment. The app sends out alerts at least once a day inviting people to rate how happy, relaxed and awake they feel. People also have the

opportunity to provide contextual information such as what they are doing, whether they are indoors or outdoors, and who they are with. A wide range of activities is included in a drop-down menu such as fishing, singing, watching TV, gambling, smoking and making love. The iPhone's GPS provides information about location and the microphone measures noise levels. If people are outdoors, they can take a photograph. Feedback is provided about current happiness levels and a chart providing information on how happiness fluctuates over time is available.

Since its launch in February 2011, mappiness has had over 3.5 million responses, from more than 52,000 people. Findings suggest that people are least happy when in urban environments, slightly happier in the suburbs, and happiest at the coast, close to mountains or walking in coniferous forests. Unsurprisingly they tend to be happier during weekends than weekdays and when they are not at work. Overall, the 'happiest' activity appears to be making love, which apparently adds about 12 happiness points. Being sick in bed is the least happy activity reducing happiness levels by almost 20 points.

I Reviewed by Gail Kinman

who is a Chartered Psychologist and Professor of Occupational Psychology at the University of Bedfordshire



An unbalanced critique



Psychologisation
in Times of
Globalisation
Jan De Vos

In 1991 I defined psychologisation as the exaggeration of the role of psychological factors. De Vos extends this to the influence of psychology where it does not belong. One example: *Supernanny*, trying to help parents with badly behaved offspring. Real psychologists are described as objectifying the subjective and potentially dangerous, given their involvement in interrogation and torture. Apparently, we also obstruct 'genuine ways of living' and people would be better off guided by intuition, elders and traditional healers. In short, De Vos regards psychology as 'obsolete'.

I found this book a hard-to-follow collection of generalisations, littered with jargon, and offering a view of psychology that I don't recognise. Statements such as 'psychology has always been without psychology as it per definition creates a subject beyond psychology' left me baffled.

In my view, this book isn't about psychologisation, let alone psychology. It's an unbalanced critique that doesn't acknowledge that we have choices. We can still go to an 'alternative' practitioner and not everyone has left religion behind. I can't recommend it.

I Routledge; 2012; Pb £19.99
Reviewed by Ellen Goudsmit
who is a health psychologist and
Fellow of the BPS



just in

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 - Decoded: The Science Behind Why We Buy** Phil Barden
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Using positive psychology with adolescents



Building Happiness, Resilience and Motivation in Adolescents: A Positive Psychology Curriculum for Wellbeing
Ruth MacConville & Tina Rae

Building Happiness, Resilience and Motivation in Adolescents is a practical resource for use in schools. MacConville and Rae acknowledge that adolescence can be a turbulent time where difficulties can develop into mental health problems. They recognise that schools play a vital role in promoting emotional well-being, which will in turn enhance learning.

The first part of the book provides a brief introduction to positive psychology. Part two

provides a PowerPoint presentation, facilitator's notes and activities to introduce new staff to the programme. Every chapter introduces the subject and offers activities focused on one of the 'character strengths'. The programme aims to build on individual strengths in a solution-focused way by increasing insight and developing flexible thinking. Practitioners can deliver parts of the programme to tailor it to the child. I would note that the facilitator would require a sensitive emotional response to some potentially difficult situations.

In summary this is a practical resource for practitioners who want an overview of positive psychology. The programme contains relevant activities and worksheets that are ideal for this client group.

I Jessica Kingsley; 2012; Pb £24.99
Reviewed by Rebecca Daniels
who is an assistant psychologist



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